

**MICHIGAN EMPLOYMENT SECURITY ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 1 of 1936 (Ex. Sess.)**

**421.54 Sanctions; penalties.**

Sec. 54. (a) A person, including a claimant for unemployment benefits, an employing entity, or an owner, director, or officer of an employing entity, who willfully violates or intentionally fails to comply with any of the provisions of this act, or a regulation of the unemployment agency promulgated under the authority of this act for which a penalty is not otherwise provided by this act is subject to the following sanctions, notwithstanding any other statute of this state or of the United States:

(i) If the unemployment agency determines that an amount has been obtained or withheld as a result of the intentional failure to comply with this act, the unemployment agency may recover the amount obtained as a result of the intentional failure to comply plus damages equal to 3 times that amount.

(ii) The unemployment agency may refer the matter to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the alleged violation occurred for prosecution. If the unemployment agency has not made its own determination under subdivision (i), the recovery sought by the prosecutor shall include the amount described in subdivision (i) and shall also include 1 or more of the following penalties:

(A) Subject to redesignation under subsection (l), if the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the intentional failure to comply is less than \$25,000.00, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 1 year.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 1 year but not to exceed 2,080 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 1 year.

(B) If the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the intentional failure to comply is \$25,000.00 or more but less than \$100,000.00, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 2 years.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 2 years but not to exceed 4,160 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 2 years.

(C) If the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the intentional failure to comply is more than \$100,000.00, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 5 years.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 5 years but not to exceed 10,400 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 5 years.

(iii) If the unemployment agency determines that an amount has been obtained or withheld as a result of a knowing violation of this act, the unemployment agency may recover the amount obtained as a result of the knowing violation and may also recover damages equal to 3 times that amount.

(iv) The unemployment agency may refer a matter under subdivision (iii) to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the alleged violation occurred for prosecution. If the unemployment agency has not made its own determination under subdivision (iii), the recovery sought by the prosecutor shall include the amount described in subdivision (iii) and shall also include 1 or more of the following penalties:

(A) Subject to redesignation under subsection (l), if the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the knowing violation is \$100,000.00 or less, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 1 year.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 1 year but not to exceed 2,080 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 1 year.

(B) If the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the knowing violation is more than \$100,000.00, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 2 years.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 2 years but not to exceed 4,160 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 2 years.

(b) Any employing unit or an owner, director, officer, or agent of an employing unit, a claimant, an employee of the unemployment agency, or any other person who makes a false statement or representation knowing it to be false, or knowingly and willfully with intent to defraud fails to disclose a material fact, to obtain or increase a benefit or other payment under this act or under the unemployment compensation law of any state or of the federal government, either for himself or herself or any other person, to prevent or reduce the payment of benefits to an individual entitled thereto or to avoid becoming or remaining a subject employer, or to avoid or reduce a contribution or other payment required from an employing unit under this act or under the unemployment compensation law of any state or of the federal government, as applicable, is subject to administrative fines and is punishable as follows, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed under any other statute of this state or of the United States:

(i) If the amount obtained as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact is less than \$500.00, the unemployment agency may recover the amount obtained as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact and may also recover damages equal to 2 times that amount. For a second or subsequent violation described in this subdivision, the unemployment agency may recover damages equal to 4 times the amount obtained.

(ii) If the amount obtained as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact is \$500.00 or more, the unemployment agency shall attempt to recover the amount obtained as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact and may also recover damages equal to 4 times that amount. The unemployment agency may refer the matter to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the alleged violation occurred for prosecution. If the unemployment agency has not made its own determination under this subdivision, the recovery sought by the prosecutor shall include the amount described in this subdivision and shall also include 1 or more of the following penalties if the amount obtained is \$1,000.00 or more:

(A) Subject to redesignation under subsection (I), if the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact is \$1,000.00 or more but less than \$25,000.00, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 1 year.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 1 year but not to exceed 2,080 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 1 year.

(B) If the amount obtained or withheld from payment as a result of the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact is \$25,000.00 or more, then 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 2 years.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 2 years but not to exceed 4,160 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 2 years.

(C) If the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact made to obtain or withhold an amount from payment does not result in a loss to the commission, then a recovery shall be sought equal to 3 times the amount that would have been obtained by the knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact, but not less than \$1,000.00, and 1 of the following:

(I) Imprisonment for not more than 2 years.

(II) The performance of community service of not more than 2 years but not to exceed 4,160 hours.

(III) A combination of (I) and (II) that does not exceed 2 years.

(c) (1) Any employing unit or an owner, director, officer, or agent of an employing unit or any other person failing to submit, when due, any contribution report, wage and employment report, or other reports lawfully prescribed and required by the unemployment agency shall be subject to the assessment of an administrative fine for each report not submitted within the time prescribed by the unemployment agency, as follows: In the case of contribution reports not received within 10 days after the end of the reporting month the fine shall be 10% of the contributions due on the reports but not less than \$5.00 or more than \$25.00 for a report. However, if the tenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or other unemployment agency nonwork day, the 10-day period shall run until the end of the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or other unemployment agency nonwork day. In the case of all other reports referred to in this subsection, the fine shall be \$10.00 for a report.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1), any employer or an owner, director, officer, or agent of an employer or any other person failing to submit, when due, any quarterly wage detail report required by section 13(2), or submitting an incomplete or erroneous report, is subject to an administrative fine of \$50.00 for each untimely report, incomplete report, or erroneous report if the report is filed not later than 30 days after the date the report is due, \$250.00 if the report is filed more than 1 calendar quarter after the date the report is due, and an additional \$250.00 for each additional calendar quarter that the report is late, except that no penalty shall apply if the employer files a corrected report within 14 days after notification of an error by the agency.

(3) If a report is filed after the prescribed time and it is shown to the satisfaction of the commission that the failure to submit the report was due to reasonable cause, a fine shall not be imposed. The assessment of a fine as provided in this subsection constitutes a final determination unless the employer files an application with the unemployment agency for a redetermination of the assessment in accordance with section 32a.

(d) If any employee or agent of the unemployment agency or member of the Michigan compensation appellate commission willfully discloses confidential information obtained from any employing unit or individual in the administration of this act for any purpose inconsistent with or contrary to the purposes of this

act, or a person who obtains a list of applicants for work or of claimants or recipients of benefits under this act uses or permits use of that list for a political purpose or for a purpose inconsistent with or contrary to the purposes of this act, he or she is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or both. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, if any unemployment agency employee, agent of the unemployment agency, or member of the Michigan compensation appellate commission knowingly, intentionally, and for financial gain, makes an illegal disclosure of confidential information obtained under section 13(2), he or she is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for not more than 1 year and 1 day.

(e) A person who, without proper authority from the unemployment agency, represents himself or herself to be an employee of the unemployment agency for the purpose of securing information regarding the unemployment or employment record of an individual is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or both.

(f) A person associated with a college, university, or public agency of this state who makes use of any information obtained from the unemployment agency in connection with a research project of a public service nature, in a manner as to reveal the identity of any individual or employing unit from or concerning whom the information was obtained by the unemployment agency, or for any purpose other than use in connection with that research project, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or both.

(g) As used in this section, "person" includes an individual; owner, director, or officer of an employing entity; copartnership; joint venture; corporation; receiver; or trustee in bankruptcy.

(h) This section applies even if the amount obtained or withheld from payment has been reported or reported and paid by an individual involved in a violation of subsection (a) or (b).

(i) If a determination is made that an individual has violated this section, the individual is subject to the sanctions of this section and, if applicable, the requirements of section 62.

(j) Amounts recovered by the commission under subsection (a) shall be credited first to the unemployment compensation fund and thereafter amounts recovered that are in excess of the amounts obtained or withheld as a result of the violation of subsection (a) shall be credited to the penalty and interest account of the contingent fund. Amounts recovered by the commission under subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f) shall be credited to the penalty and interest account of the contingent fund in accordance with section 10(6).

(k) Amounts recovered by the unemployment agency under subsection (b) shall be credited in the following order:

(i) From the penalty assessment recovered, an amount equal to 15% of any benefit overpayments resulting from fraud shall be credited to the unemployment compensation fund.

(ii) For the balance of deductions from unemployment insurance benefits, to the liability for benefit repayment under this section.

(iii) For all other recoveries, the balance shall first be credited to the unemployment compensation fund for repayment of any remaining amounts owed, and then to the contingent fund to be applied first to administrative sanctions and damages and then to interest.

(l) A person who obtains or withholds an amount of unemployment benefits or payments exceeding \$3,500.00 but less than \$25,000.00 as a result of a knowing false statement or representation or the knowing and willful failure to disclose a material fact is guilty of a felony punishable as provided in subsection (a)(ii)(A) or (iv)(A) or subsection (b)(ii)(A).

**History:** 1936, Ex. Sess., Act 1, Imd. Eff. Dec. 24, 1936;—Am. 1939, Act 324, Imd. Eff. June 22, 1939;—Am. 1941, Act 364, Imd. Eff. July 1, 1941;—Am. 1947, Act 360, Imd. Eff. July 8, 1947;—CL 1948, 421.54;—Am. 1965, Act 281, Eff. Sept. 5, 1965;—Am. 1965, Act 398, Imd. Eff. Oct. 26, 1965;—Am. 1971, Act 231, Imd. Eff. Jan. 3, 1972;—Am. 1974, Act 104, Eff. June 9, 1974;—Am. 1983, Act 164, Imd. Eff. July 24, 1983;—Am. 1985, Act 197, Imd. Eff. Dec. 26, 1985;—Am. 1989, Act 225, Eff. Mar. 29, 1990;—Am. 1991, Act 10, Eff. Apr. 1, 1992;—Am. 1993, Act 280, Imd. Eff. Dec. 28, 1993;—Am. 1994, Act 162, Imd. Eff. June 17, 1994;—Am. 2002, Act 192, Imd. Eff. Apr. 26, 2002;—Am. 2011, Act 14, Imd. Eff. Mar. 29, 2011;—Am. 2011, Act 269, Imd. Eff. Dec. 19, 2011;—Am. 2013, Act 143, Imd. Eff. Oct. 29, 2013.

**Compiler's note:** Enacting section 1 of Act 143 of 2013 provides:

"Enacting section 1. This amendatory act applies to a deduction or recovery made pursuant to a determination or redetermination issued after October 21, 2013."

**Administrative rules:** R 421.10 et seq. of the Michigan Administrative Code.